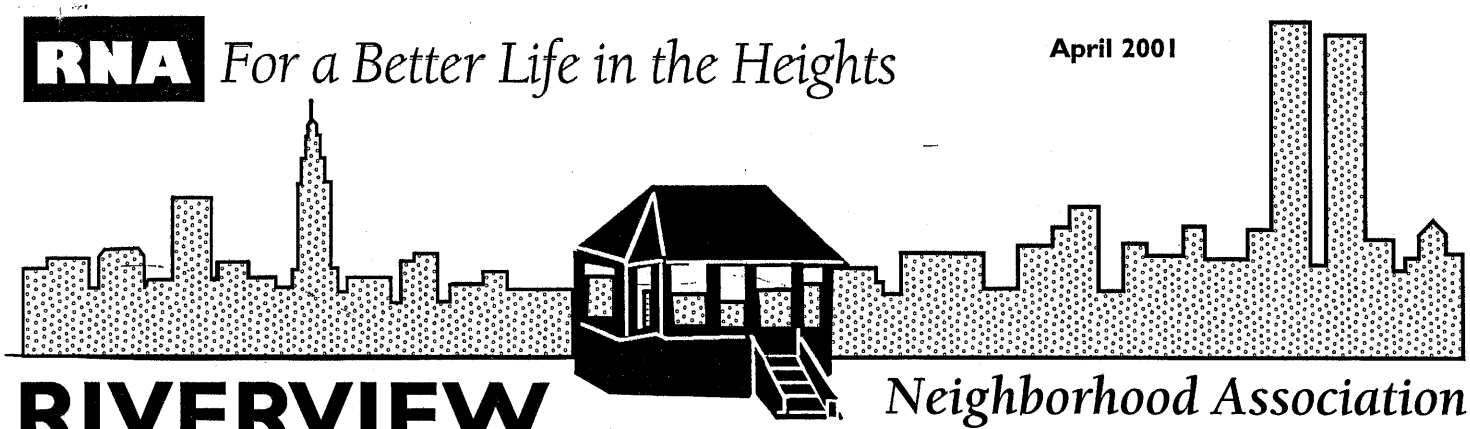
RNA For a Better Life in the Heights

April 2001



RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

232 Ogden Avenue • Jersey City, NJ 07307 • 201 798 0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION or ELECTED OFFICIAL

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Mayoral candidates **Tom DeGise** and **Kevin Sluka** will appear at RNA's April meeting to discuss their platforms. It is an opportunity for our community to question these candidates about their positions regarding our local issues and concerns. Their slate's ward candidates for both C and D have also been invited to make brief presentations. Other at-large candidates are also welcome to participate in this forum.

In February and March, RNA hosted mayoral candidates **Robert Cavanaugh**, **Glenn Cunningham**, **Melissa Holloway**, **Louis Manzo** and **Gerald McCann** and members of their respective slates.

In other election news, the **Heights Coalition of Neighborhood and Block Associations** (HCNBA) will co-sponsor the traditional mayoral forum organized by the **Hilltop Neighborhood Association**. The debate will take place on **Monday, April 16th** at **Saint Joseph's Church Hall** located at **Pavonia and Baldwin Avenues**. The event will start at **7:00 PM**.

HCNBA is also organizing two debates for Wards C and D on the respective Sundays of April 22nd and 29th. At press time, the specific details for time and location are being finalized. A separate flyer will be mailed announcing the time, date and location for these two important local races.

ANNUAL RNA ELECTIONS

The annual election of RNA's executive officers was adjourned to the April 10th meeting because there was no time to vote in March due to the large agenda of guests, candidates and topics. The nominations were opened in February and will remain open until the end of the April meeting at which time the election will finally take place.

The following names have been placed in nomination for the following RNA executive positions:

CHAIR:	Vito Brunetti
VICE-CHAIR:	David Crowder, Sandy Martiny
SECRETARY:	Maria Tuzzo
TREASURER:	Tim Gilliard
SGT-at-ARMS:	Len Davis, Joe Sadowsky

To be eligible to vote, you must be eighteen years old,

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COMMUNITYUPDATES

MILLENNIUM TOWERS LAWSUIT:

On Thursday, March 29th, **Superior Court Judge Jose Fuentes** ruled in favor of RNA, the **Coalition for a Better Waterfront** and the **City of Hoboken** and effectively killed the infamous **Millennium Towers** (MT) project, to build two 43 story towers on the Hoboken border. He stated that the **Planning Board** lacked a quorum of legally appointed members when it considered this project because the terms of five of them had expired and the sixth member was not even a City resident. Therefore, the Judge vacated both of the Board's decisions regarding

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STEEP SLOPE ZONING ORDINANCE:

On March 28th, the **City Council** voted to introduce a Steep Slope provision as part of the City's newly proposed zoning ordinance. The provision would create a **Palisade Preservation Overlay District** to protect the Palisade Cliffs as a natural resource in our City. It would include specific performance standards for 1) setbacks on the top (30 feet) and bottom (65 feet) of the cliff, 2) a "no-build zone" on any land that has a grade of 30 % and 3) limiting the height of any structure within 25% from the top of the cliff.

The City's version is not as comprehensive as the community's original proposal because it does not include such protections as view corridors, a density

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122-124 OGDEN AVENUE:

On Thursday, March 22nd, the **Board of Adjustment** voted unanimously to deny the developer's application to build a mid-rise apartment building at this location. The project required seven different zoning variances because it was too large for the lot size. The community opposed the project because it was too big for the area and would have exacerbated exiting traffic and parking problems at Ogden and Cuneo Place. The **Planning Division** opposed the project because it ignored the recommendations of the new Master Plan and the proposed

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Spring Activities

Spring is now upon us and it is time to start organizing for the annual activities in our community. The date of **Saturday, June 2nd** (and the rain date of June 9) has been chosen for our annual **Park Fair and Flea Market**. As usual, RNA is looking for volunteers for planning, advertising, subscriptions and day-of coordination and clean-up.

This year, we are also looking for individuals with musical or theatrical talents. RNA wants to showcase musicians, singers, dancers and actors throughout the Park during this event. If interested, come to the April meeting for more information or contact, **Patrick at 798-9390** or **Maria at 659-2245**.

Because of the urgency of the community's other pressing issues, a date has still not be chosen for the annual Park clean-up. This year's clean-up will include the first installation of the tile wall project organized by **Sandy Martiny** and **Beverly Ruggia-Brown**. Volunteers interested in helping with this event should come to the April meeting for further information.

RNA Elections *(continued from front page)*

have paid your annual dues and live or own property within the boundaries of the RNA. The Association's boundaries are Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Cuneo Place to Congress Street.

To run for office, an individual, in addition to the above qualifications, must be a current resident living within the RNA boundaries and an active member.

The success and longevity of RNA is based on the participation of our members, neighbors and friends. Get involved by either nominating someone or being nominated yourself. More important, come to the meeting and vote in this election. By participating in this important neighborhood activity, you will have a voice in the decisions being made in your community.

COMMUNITYUPDATES

(continued from front page)

MILLENNIUM TOWERS LAWSUIT:
MT project:

1) the May 9th recommendation to amend the Jersey Avenue Redevelopment Plan for this specific project by increasing the height limitation by over 300%, and

2) its subsequent approval of the developer's site plan on June 20th. The Judge placed the blame squarely on the current administration of **Mayor Bret Schundler**, stating that the failure to maintain a properly constituted and independent Planning Board was a deliberate plan to frustrate the legislative plan of the State's Municipal Land Use Law.

In another development, the **Committee of Petitioners** has appealed the Court's earlier decision to stop their referendum efforts to place the MT's 20 year tax abatement on the ballot.

STEEP SLOPE ZONING ORDINANCE:
reduction formula and the limitation of the cutting into the embankment of the slopes. However, there is agreement between the Planning Division and the community that this is just an interim measure subject to review and amendment in the near future, but that it is needed now to protect the Palisades from pending proposals for large scale development below the cliff. All aspects of the interim proposal are under discussion with the City. The zoning ordinance with the provisional steep slope article is expected to be voted on by the City Council on April 11th.

Many thanks are due to the lobbying efforts of local community activists and the combined efforts of members of RNA, **Sgt Anthony N.A.**, **Heights Hope N.A.** and **Palisade Avenue Coalition**.

122-124 OGDEN AVENUE:
Zoning Ordinance to rezone this area for low density housing. Both the community and the Planning Division instead recommended that the owners develop two-family housing.

After the meeting, one of the developers discussed designing a smaller project with less units that he would present to the community for review.

MEETING MINUTES:

(The following is a summary of the February and March meetings of the Riverview Neighborhood Association.)

February 13:

The meeting was opened at 7:35 by the Chair. After announcing the agenda for the evening, the first order of business was to open the nominations for RNA executive officers.

Police:
Deputy Chief Peter Behrens, commander of the North District talked about the assault of two women on Palisade Avenue. The perpetrator was arrested and charged with assault. He announced that the police are still cracking down on the commuter vans "trolling" along Palisade Avenue and the installation of radar detection to enforce the local speed limit.

He informed the group of a three month narcotics operation which targeted several areas of drug sales, including a 24 hour beauty parlor. The Chief opined that these 24 hour businesses attract illegal activities. He stressed that his "zero tolerance" policy for quality of life crimes was successful as evidenced in the number of summons being given out.

Assisi Animal Center:
The second speaker was **Tom Hart**, the director of the **Hudson County Animal Shelter**, recently renamed the Assisi Center. He discussed the policy changes that have been made in the shelter, including the adopt-a-pet program. This program allows people to take home an ani-

mal for a limited period of time and give it individualized attention. The Center is also looking for volunteers to exercise the animals.

Tom stressed the need for a new shelters for Jersey City and the other municipalities in Hudson County.

Glenn Cunningham:

The first of the mayoral candidates to speak was former City Council President and U. S. Marshall **Glenn Cunnningham**. He discussed his personal upbringing in Jersey City and his various careers in government, including police captain and county freeholder.

He promised that as mayor he would strive to improve the morale of the police force by appointing leaders with law enforcement backgrounds and from the Jersey City community. He said he would like to see not only community activists on the different Boards, but also professionals with knowledge of the subjects they would be voting on. He stated that he would listen to the people in the communities and get their input on local issues that personally affect them.

Robert Cavanaugh:

The second mayoral speaker of the evening was Greenville Councilman **Robert Cavanaugh**. Born and raised in Jersey City, he currently practices law in the City.

As mayor, he would like to see more businesses brought back into the City to improve employment opportunities for the local youth. He believes that drug abuse and crime can be countered by providing education and jobs for the youth.

He also believes that Board members should come from the community. He fielded questions in his capacity as Councilman regarding his vote on the Millennium Towers zoning amendments and his support for the community's steep slope proposal.

The February meeting ended at 10: 00 PM after the nominations for RNA officers was updated.

March 13:

The meeting opened at 7:35.

NID/Police:

NID manager **Ron Clemente**, gave a brief update on several problems that he was working on in our community, including dogs running loose in the Park and the children's playground.

Sgt. Mark Ruby of the North District reported that local criminal activity including burglaries and robberies was being reduced by the North District's pro-active policies.

Community Updates:

Clif Steinbring compared the City steep slope proposal to the community's plan, saying that it lacked some of the fundamental safeguards needed to protect the Palisade Cliffs from development. The City also decided to table a Council resolution to authorize a blight study of the cliffs and the area below until the steep slope protections were in place. **Sal Riggi** announced the he would discuss the community's steep slope proposal with the Environmental Committee.

Louis Manzo:

Mayoral hopeful **Lou Manzo** started his presentation by announcing that he did not believe in any development on or near the Palisade Cliffs. He stated that as mayor he would listen carefully to all his constituents. He also believes that the governing Boards should be represented by people more in line with neighborhood issues. He promised that he would re-evaluate the City's policy of giving tax abatements. He also promised that he would not accept any money from developers for his campaign. He said that he hears the same complaints about the lack of City services throughout Jersey City, which have been either cut or privatized. People tell him that the City appears to be more responsive to developers than to the ordinary tax paying citizens. He favored development of inner city brownfield properties as affordable housing projects. He would encourage youth programs, magnet schools and after school programs. He commented on the morale problem within the police department and how as mayor he would maintain an open dialogue with its members.

He introduced his ward candidates **Maureen Corcoran** for Ward D and **Walter McDermott** for Ward C. **Yvonne Balcer**, one of Manzo's at-large candidates spoke about her commitment to review the municipal budget and all future abatements.

Gerald McCann:

Former Mayor **Gerald McCann** took credit for the first waterfront developments,including the Light Rail and the Liberty Science Center. He criticized the Schundler administration for privatizing many services like the Water Department and creating a huge budget deficit despite the influx of "pilot" money from abated properties and huge revenues from the Parking Authority. As mayor, he would move City Hall to Journal Square to encourage development of this area. He favors new school construction to reduce class size and training of our police cadets at a reactivated local academy instead of the current state facility in Sea Girt.

He introduced his Ward D council candidate, **Tom Monteleone** to the meeting.

Melissa Holloway:

If elected mayor, Councilwoman Holloway stressed the need for preparing our children for white collar jobs and encouraging the participation of both parents and the business community. She would focus on developing the inner city by providing low interest loans to home owners. She would move the Planning Division into the mayor's office and hire more planners who would be sensitive to neighborhood concerns. As mayor, she would solicit funds from the public and private sectors. She would promote the use of community recreation centers and non-traditional sports for both boys and girls.

The election for RNA officers was postponed until the April meeting because there was no time to vote. The meeting ended at 10:10 PM.

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

MEET MAYORAL and WARD CANDIDATES AT
OUR MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 10th
THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 7:00 PM SHARP
BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL AGENDA.

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
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Riverview Neighborhood Association

RNA

Vito Brunetti
Chairperson

Steven Carr
Vice-chairperson

Maria Tuzzo
Secretary

Tim Gilliard
Treasurer

Beth D'Errico
Sergeant at Arms

COMING EVENTS:

CRAFT FAIR: Wednesday, April 4, 10 AM to 4 PM
Location: Harbor View Health Care Center, corner of Franklin St. and Ogden Ave.
A sale of candy, jewelry & religious articles by the Harbor View residents.

RNA Meeting: Tuesday, April 10, 7:00 PM
Location: Harbor View Health Care Center, corner of Franklin St. and Ogden Ave.
Mayoral Candidates: Tom DeGise, Kevin Sluka
Council Candidates: Bill Gaughan, Arnold Bettinger, L. Harvey Smith
Community Updates:
Millennium Towers Lawsuit
Steep Slope Zoning Ordinance
Spring Activities
Annual Elections for RNA Officers

Mayoral Debate: Monday, April 16, 7:00 PM
Location: St Joseph's Church Hall, corner of Pavonia and Baldwin Avenues
Sponsored by the Hilltop Neighborhood Association
and the Heights Coalition of Neighborhood and Block Assns.